Nuggets of News

GOLD HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
gold discovered 1860
1986
recording the past for the future

P.O. Box 26
Gold Hill, Ore. 97525
325 Second Ave.

March 1992

Jackson County has a relatively new historic commission. It was established in January of 1991 to protect and record historic properties and sites within Jackson County.

To be eligible for inclusion in the Register, your property must meet one or more of the following criteria.

A) Its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places;

B) Its association with historic events or periods of development in the County;

C) Its antiquity (generally, properties less than 50 years old are considered eligible only if they are of exceptional importance within the County:

D) Its unique architectural design or mode of construction because of:

i) Its representative character of a period or style of architecture or method of construction;

ii) Its extraordinary or unusual architectural merit by reason of its design detail, use of materials or craftsmanship; or

iii) Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, or master builder whose individual work has influence development in the nation, state, region or County.

E) Its relationship to the broad cultural history of the nation, state, region or County;

F) Its identification with an individual or group who have significantly contributed to the history and development of the County;

G) Its association with an ethnic, religious, or social groups with distinctive traits, beliefs, and social forms; and,

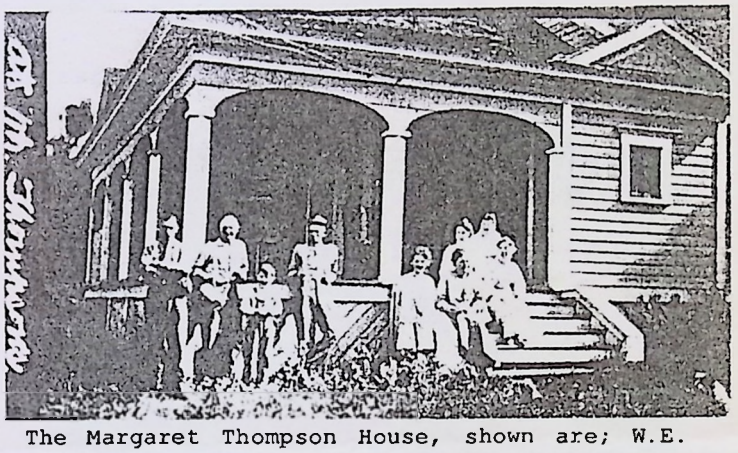
H) Its identification as a unique object representing an aesthetic, educational or scientific feature or the regions, such as:

i) Archaeological sites which contain material evidence of human activities of the prehistoric of historic past; or

ii) Natural features which provided habitat or influenced settlement and development of the prehistoric or historic past; or

iii) Scenic features which have received value for this aesthetic appearance and recreational use during the historic period; or

iv) Conservation areas which represent early attempts at protecting natural resources for public benefit.

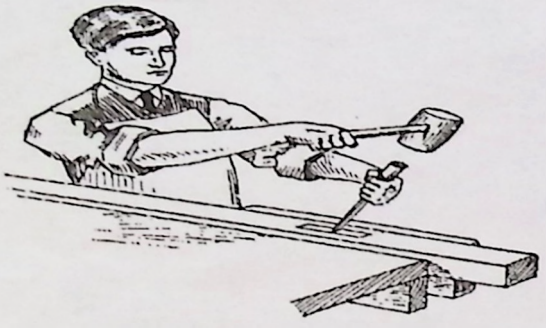


The Margaret Thompson House, shown are; W.E. Thompson, Chavner, Hortense, Margaret and Mr. and Mrs. Walters G.H.H.S. Neg. 794

In recent months, the Margaret Chavner Thompson house has been the center of much controversy. It is the first to be listed in the Jackson County Register of Historic Landmarks under section 226.040(1) of the Jackson County Land Development Ordinance. The action was set in motion by a request from the new owners, Herbert and Lori Hymas for the demolition of the

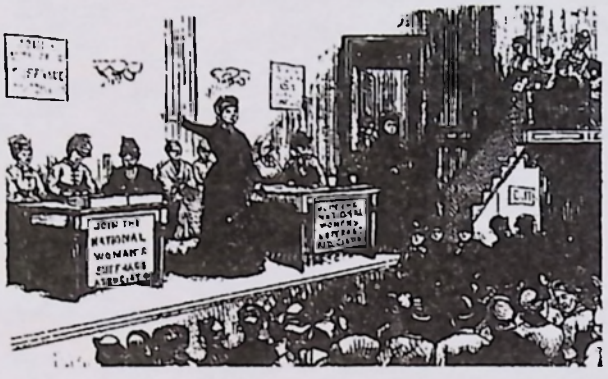
dwelling. The Historic Commission stepped in and put a freeze on plans the Hymas's had until the historic significance of the building could be determined. At the present time the commission is working with the Hymas's to reach an agreement that will be satisfactory to both parties involved. Options would be moving the house to a location more visible to the public or a historic marker upon demolition telling about the house and the Chavner family. The Gold Hill Historical Society attended the hearings and requested copies of any available photographs and a complete history of the home for their records if the house is demolished.

The Margaret Chavner Thompson house qualifies for inclusion in the Jackson County Register of Historic Landmarks under criterion B, C, E and F.



Two Medford contractors, R.W. Gray and John Atwell constructed the farm style house in 1906-07. Although the house is quite ordinary, it displays some Queen Anne features in the octagonal porch columns that support the elliptical arches of the rap around front porch and shingle treatment in the gable ends.

The house is one of the few examples of a second generation dwelling built as an accessory to a 19th Century farmstead in Jackson County. The house is historically significant because of its association with the Chavner family. The Chanvers contributed to the economic development of Jackson County and were the founding family of the town of Gold Hill. The structure's value is enhanced because of its physical relationship with the larger Chavner farm complex that is situated on the adjacent parcel. These properties display a high degree of historic character. The complex retains such features as the main farm residence, the second generation dwelling, barns, scalehouse (licensed continuously since the 1870's), accessory structures and a beautiful setting.



The house is also significant for its association with Margaret Chavner Thompson, who was active in the State Equal Suffrage Association. In 1898 she served as the Representative from Jackson County and with others, signed an opened letter to the State of Oregon Legislative Assembly. The Equal Suffrage Association was influential in the 1912 Oregon Legislature's approval for women's right to vote.

The Margaret Chavner Thompson house is the third dwelling to be built on the vast estate of Thomas Chavner. The first house was a rustic cabin built on the Donation Land Claim of James Hawkin's in the early 1850's. This modest cabin suited Thomas Chavner who was known to be quite frugal. Chavner

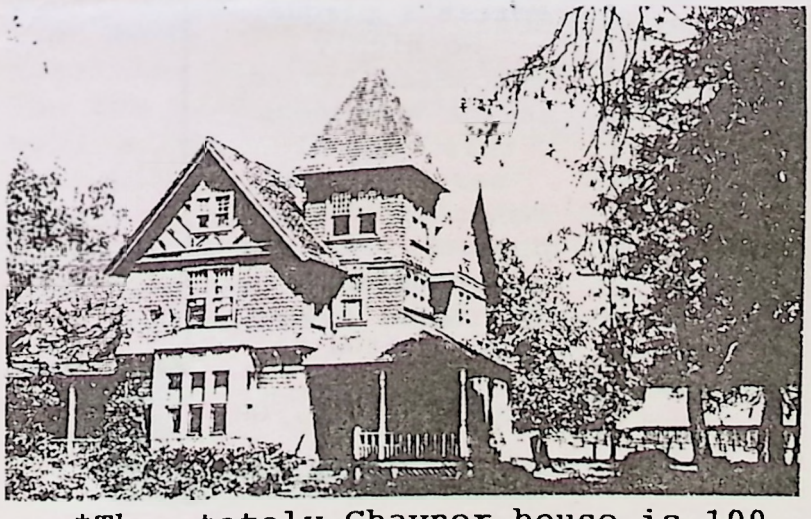
improved and added to his land until he had nearly 2000 acres in the Gold Hill area and a section (640 acres) of timber southeast of Ashland. Chavner died in 1888 at the age of 80.

The first dwelling on the vast estate of Thomas Chavner. It was located where Foley lane make a 90° turn and heads south. *L.Genaw collection

The Chavner children ordered plans from the architectural firm of Palliser and Palliser of Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1892, for the large Queen Anne dwelling that served as the Chavner homeplace for many years. A homesite was selected one mile north west of the first Chavner dwelling, along the new Valley Road which later became part of the Pacific Highway. Margaret lived with her sister Mary Anne Pryce and two brothers, Peter and Michael in the house until she married William Emmitt Thompson July 23, 1906. William Thompson was instrumental in the development of the Blue Ledge Copper mine located on the headwaters of the Applegate river. Margaret and her husband designed the cottage style house. The Thompson's has two children, Hortense, who was born in 1908 and the late Chavner Thompson born in 1909. William Thompson died at the age of 84 in 1954. Margaret continued to live in the house until 1970 when she was moved into a convalescent home in Medford. She died at the age of 102 in 1974.

Some other properties in our area being considered for listing in the County Historic Register are; The Chavner House, the Rock Point Stage Stop, the John White house, the Foley homeplace and the Shultz house in Sams Valley.

If you would like your house listed contact Scott Clay at the Jackson County Planning Commission.



*The stately Chavner house is 100 years old this year

*Margaret Chavner Thompson near one of the many rose bushes planted around her house. Ca. 1945

(C)LMG 1992

President's Message

At the December 1991 meeting of the Gold Hill Historical Society a search was initiated to find a new President. It wasn't because Clare Moore hadn't done a good job quite the contrary. She had done such a good job we were all worried that the burnout syndrome would strike her down. So, at the January meeting a train load of members decided to railroad me into the position!

Since I'm not a politician, I will not make many promises, but will strive to uphold the esteem of the office of President to the best of my limited capability. (Living in Medford creates some problems, but I am confident my able assistants will help me over the rough spots.)

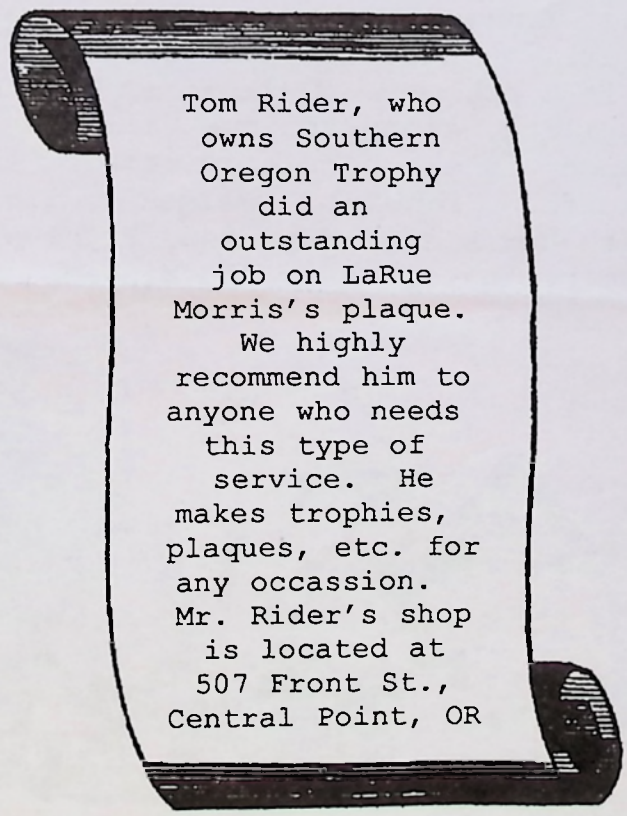
NATIVE OF GOLD HILL

Some of you old timers may remember me as that skinny kid that lived up on the hill at 6th and 7th and ran around the hills with the Dungey boys. I was born in the old Milam boarding house in October of 1919, attended Gold Hill schools through the 9th grade, then moved to Medford. I worked at Sam Jennings Co. from 1940 to 1985 with 10 years out for the Army, 1942-1952.

I bring with me early day Gold Hill history since my ancestors were early settlers in the Sams Valley, Gall Creek and Sardine Creek areas. My father was Editor and Publisher of "The Gold Hill News" from 1916-1926. My grandfather on my mothers side was a stage coach and freight wagon driver out of the Dardenelles in the 1890's.

My primary goal for 1992 will be to encourage every current member to sign up at least two new members and also ask them to encourage at least one member to attend meetings and get involved. Our fledgling society has done well in its few years of existence and has become full-fledged due to the untiring efforts of a nucleus of dedicated members. I predict our society will continue to grow and I plan to be part of the push.

Sincerely
Ted Wharton, President


Tom Rider, who owns Southern Oregon Trophy did an outstanding job on LaRue Morris's plaque. We highly recommend him to anyone who needs this type of service. He makes trophies, plaques, etc. for any occassion. Mr. Rider's shop is located at 507 Front St., Central Point, OR

MEMBER PROFILE

Winona Nichols

By Gene Heil

In 1921, during the winter, the Doctor didn't always get to a maternity case in time to deliver the baby. Helen Shoemaker had made arrangements to be in town when her baby made her appearance. Winona Shoemaker was born to Helen and Ed Shoemaker in her aunt Mary Shoemaker's home at 918 Second Ave. February 7, 1921. (It is the early twentieth century bungalow style house with big rock porch.) After a few days the family went home to Kanes Creek where Winnie lived until she was sixteen.

Winona was bussed in to Gold Hill to go to school. In her Junior year Winnie was ill with tonsillitis and it became impossible for her to attend school. Although she kept up with the work, she was denied the chance to take the final exams, so she did not graduate. During the thirties it was the opinion of most educators that women did not need an education. They were tolerated in high school only to fill in the time until they could catch a husband. At that time, in Oregon, students were only required to pass the eighth grade exams or reach the age of 16 to finish their formal education. Winnie passed the eighth grade tests at a much earlier age than most. Her eighth grade diploma qualified her for a bookkeeping job. The few Gold Hill businesses needed help a few hours a week, which was not enough,for Winnie to support herself. Many other people were also scrambling for the occasional jobs that were available.

She was work oriented as were most of the depression era teenagers. Winnie's first job was as a mother's helper and babysitter, for Marguerite and Velde Biles. She made $3.00 a week plus room and board. After Velde finished his bus route and returned home, Winnie would go to the O.K. Pastime where Marguerite worked and she would fix her a cold ham sandwich on a bun and a Coke Cola. Winnie went to Medford and bought a pair of black spike high heels with her first pay check for $1.98!

On July 3, 1938, she married George Large. PARADISE!, Paradise, California that is! That's where George and Winnie were married. George was a logger. They had two sons, D. Lee was born September 30, 1939 in Woodland, Washington and Robert Ralph was born in Alturas, California, January 29, 1942. They are now both comfortable middle aged Viet Nam Veterans.

Winnie and George were divorced in 1948 and Winnie came back to Gold Hill.

Winona Nichols

She worked in the produce department at the Big Y in Medford and then sang at the Y Club.

Soon the "Depression Child Syndrome" took charge, "better job elsewhere", so she wondered across

the United States. Winnie's longest stint in one place, was in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where she remained for six years. The Rogue Valley called her home in 1965.

She worked at the Walker Waffle Shop in Medford until she married James Baker, who she had met in Seattle. They moved to Tucson Arizona. They were divorced six years later. Winnie again came home to the Valley.

She went to work at the bakery in the east Medford Safeway store. She moved to Medford and lived with her uncle Harry and aunt Eva Steelman. When Harry's wife died, Winnie kept house for him. By this time he was 85 years old.

She met Kenneth Nichols who was the nephew of Aunt Eva (Painter) in 1971. Ken and Winnie were married October 11, 1972. Together they took care of uncle Harry until his death in 1977 at the ripe old age of 95 1/2!

Winnie and Ken live in the old Alva Walker house on First Avenue that Helen and Ed Shoemaker bought years ago. Ken remodeled it in the early seventies. They are both hard workers. If there is a job to be done, do it, seems to be the motto of both of them.

Winnie was the Secretary / Treasurer of the Rock Point Cemetery Association for 10 years. She was Office Manager of the Southern Oregon Chapter of the Diabetic Association, (which means she was the whole office force) from 1982 through 1985. She has been the Treasurer of the Gold Hill Historical Society since the early part of 1989. Winnie is Curator of our museum. With the help of four volunteers, she makes sure the museum is opened from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. six days a week.

Winnie's mother was Helen Steelman who came to Oregon with her mother Winona in the early 1900's. They settled up Galls Creek where the had and orchard. Mrs. Steelman was widowed. She latter married her brother-in-law, John W. Steelman.

Winnie's father was Edward Shoemaker. His father was Joseph Shoemaker and his mother was Olive Horn. The Shoemakers came to Oregon in the mid 1870's and the Horn's came in the 1860's. Both families lived up Galls Creek.

Winnie's father Ed Shoemaker was a fine fiddle player. He played at dances all over the valley. His fiddle is on display at the Gold Hill Historical Society museum.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

If you have time to work a shift either 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., or 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. please give Winnie a call and she will schedule you for a few hours. It is great fun and you get to meet people from all over the world!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

FOR ALL THOSE BORN BEFORE 1945

WE ARE SURVIVORS!!!!!....CONSIDER THE CHANGES WE HAVE WITNESSED!

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and "THE PILL". We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens. Before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip dry clothes.... and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for

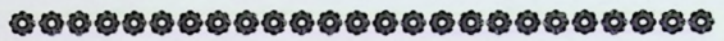
clothes, not for "coming out". Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer jeans scheming were girls named Jean and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during lent and Outer Space was the back of the Cavern Theater. We were before house husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and computer marriages. We were before day care centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness... not computers or condominiums. A chip meant a piece of wood. Hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word.

Back then, "MADE IN JAPAN", meant junk and the term "MAKING OUT" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, McDonald's and instant coffee were unheard of. We hit the scene where there were 5 and 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents. Ice cream cones sold for a nickel or a dime. For one nickel you could make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two post cards. You could buy a new Chevy for $600.00....but who could afford one. A pity too because gas was 11 cents a gallon.

In our day, GRASS was mowed, COKE was a drink and POT was something you cooked in. ROCK MUSIC was Grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the Principal's office. We were certainly not before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but were surely before the sex change. We made do with what we had. And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby.

No wonder we are so confused and there is so much generation gap today. But .... we survived ... What better reason to celebrate?



I have been corresponding with a lady by the name of Rita Joyce Stewart for the last couple of years. She is related to the Cook family, therefore she is probably related to just about every pioneer family in our area. Here Great Grandfather was Robert A. Cook, her Grandfather was John Andrew Cook and his wife Emma Florence Bailey Cook. Ms. Stewart's father was Hardy Jess Cook.

I would like to share a letter she sent me that her uncle Bob Cook wrote her in 1958. She had written to him and asked if he could tell her anything about the town of Gold Hill, etc. The following is his response verbatim. *LMG*

"Gold Hill, Ore
Joyce Stewart Aug. 58

Dear Niece: I received your letter a few days ago, was glad to hear from you. We are all pretty well at present, hope this finds you and Bill already to go fishing and hunting. My wife and I go hunting every fall, and we fish some we live so near the Rogue River, but we go to the Illinois River in Josephine county. Occasionally I received the Band Wagon Paper. This Mrs. Kendle J. Dufur you mentioned in your letter lives near us I have known the Dufur family for 45 years.

In regard to the old bar in Gold Hill it was bought in 1895 by Charley Young and Court Hall, they bought it in Portland from Brunswick Balk and Calander Co. and shipped it to Gold Hill (price was $1800.00).

I was here when they bought it. The first bartenders was Howard Betts and John Cameron, both having passed on several years ago. The first bar that Young and Hall had in their business was a pine board layed across two beer kegs and had two crude card tables for gambling purposes. However I think someone got mixed up on the things that was shipped and to the dates there is two pianos in Jackson county that was shipped around the Horn about 1853, one belongs to Mrs. Wesley Birdseye, the other belongs to Gladis Robins of Rock Point. The pianos are in good condition they come by boat from Ney [New] York, around to Scotts Burg (Coos Bay) then brought to the Rogue River Valley either pack mules or wagon.

When I was a boy all our provisions was packed by Mexicans then later was hauled by wagons from Scotts Burg and Crescent City and Redding California by white men. That was before the Southern Pacific built the railroad through the Rogue River Valley. The railroad built through here in 1884 from Roseburg and it built from Redding Cal at the same time and connected in the Siskiyou mountains in the tunnel in 1886. I was born in Iowa in Dec. 17th 1877, in 1879 I came with my parents to Redding California that was the end of the railroad, and my Grandpa Cook was living on Foots Creek he met us with a hack and a span of mules old Pete and Bonney that was the mules names.

BOB COOK

Well I think I have written enough for this time, however I could go on and on. I have seen this country grow from the mining days to the present time, there was no Medford when we come [came] here, Jacksonville was the County seat from about 1852 until about 1926 when it was moved to Medford, where it is at the present time.

Well I must ring off for now hoping to hear from you again as ever your uncle Bob Cook, tell the folks hello for us."

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

If you, or a friend would like to help us preserve the rich history of Gold Hill and the surrounding area, receive the historical society newsletter, and other fun stuff, complete the form below and return it with your $5.00 check or money order for a Family Membership to:

Gold Hill Historical Society
P. O. Box 26 325 Second Avenue Phone 855-1182 ·
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____ *Zip*_____

*Telephone*_____

OFFICERS:

President:
Ted Wharton 773-4525
Vice President:
Tom Cushman 855-7606
Secretary:
Marge Martin 855-1559
Treasurer:
Winona Nichols 855-7729
Past President:
Clare Moore 855-1891

NUGGETS OF NEWS:
Editor:
Linda Genaw
Staff:
Genevieve Heil
Clare Moore
Tom Cushman
Mary Lou Campbell
Cindy Faubion